

## Barbara L. Cubin

1946–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE  
REPUBLICAN FROM WYOMING

1995–



Image courtesy of the Member

**AS THE FIRST WOMAN TO REPRESENT WYOMING** in Congress, Barbara Cubin quickly established herself as a defender of western state interests in the House. Congresswoman Cubin also became one of the highest-ranking women in the GOP, serving as Secretary of the House Republican Conference and chairing the Committee on Resources' Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources.

Barbara Sage was born in Salinas, California, on November 30, 1946, the daughter of Russell and Barbara Sage. She was raised in Casper, Wyoming, and graduated from Natrona County High School. In 1969, Sage earned a B.S. in chemistry from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. She later took graduate courses in business administration at Casper College. She worked as a chemist, a substitute math and science teacher, and a social worker for the elderly and disabled. Barbara Sage married Frederick W. Cubin, a physician, and they raised two sons, William and Eric. From 1975 to 1994, while Barbara Cubin managed her husband's medical practice, she also was active in the local parent teacher association and as a shelter volunteer. In 1986 she won election to the Wyoming house of representatives, where she chaired the joint interim economic development subcommittee. Cubin also served as the Natrona County chairman for Craig Thomas during his successful bid for Wyoming's At-Large seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1992, Cubin won a Wyoming senate seat, where she served on the revenue committee.

In 1994, when Representative Thomas campaigned for the U.S. Senate, Cubin won the five-way primary to succeed him in the At-Large House seat. In the general election, she ran on a pro-life platform and pledged to curb federal control of western lands. In a three-way race, Cubin prevailed with 53 percent of the vote, becoming the first woman to represent the "Equality State" in Congress. She has won her five re-election bids.<sup>1</sup>

When she claimed her seat in the 104th Congress (1995–1997) in January 1995, Representative Cubin received assignments on the Resources and Science committees. In the 105th Congress (1997–1999), she resigned the Science Committee assignment for a spot on the Commerce Committee (now Energy and Commerce). On the Resources Committee, Cubin chaired the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee from the 105th Congress through the 108th Congress (2003–2005).

Cubin focused on western land, mineral, infrastructure, and transportation issues and earned a reputation as a tenacious fighter for western interests.<sup>2</sup> With the federal government owning half of Wyoming land, much of Cubin's legislative program was aimed at relaxing federal land use restrictions and bringing her state a higher profile in Washington. As a cofounder of the Congressional Mining Caucus, Cubin drew attention to the mining industry in her state, particularly coal and trona (a soda ash used in glass and baking soda) extraction. In the 106th Congress (1999–2001), she looked to nationalize a Wyoming pilot program allowing mining companies that worked on public lands to pay federal taxes in minerals rather than dollars. She also pushed for the placement of a federal meat inspector in Wyoming to encourage growth of meat packing plants in the state.<sup>3</sup> Cubin backed the George W. Bush administration's national energy policy in 2001. She advocated the development of alternative sources of energy, including coal, nuclear, hydroelectric, and wind.<sup>4</sup>

In October 1998, when a gay University of Wyoming student was brutally murdered—singled out for his sexual orientation—Cubin, whose sons also attended the school, led the chorus of indignation. “We cannot lie down, we cannot bury our heads, and we cannot sit on our hands,” she said, cosponsoring a motion expressing the House's outrage over the incident.<sup>5</sup> Cubin also has spoken out about the importance of family values and stability. She has been a staunch opponent of abortion rights. She also has been an unwavering critic of gun control. In 2000, she was elected to the National Rifle Association's board of directors.<sup>6</sup>

Cubin rose into the GOP leadership quickly, serving in her early terms as a Deputy Majority Whip. In the 107th Congress, she was elected Secretary of the Republican Conference, the sixth-ranking GOP leadership position in the House. During the race, she called for regional balance and a western state perspective in leadership circles. “I believe the views of a Member from a Mountain West public lands state have too long been absent from the leadership table,” she explained. “Achieving a better working relationship through issue education with Members who don't have to deal with an absent landlord is important to me and to the well-being of our conference.”<sup>7</sup> Cubin also joined the Steering Committee, which parcels out committee assignments.

## FOR FURTHER READING

*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*, “Barbara L. Cubin,”  
<http://bioguide.congress.gov>

## NOTES

- 1 “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,”  
<http://clerk.house.gov/members/electionInfo/elections.html>.
- 2 Joel Achenbach, “See You in September: The GOP Freshmen Had a Giddy First Semester, but the Grading Gets Tougher When They Return,” 14 August 1995, *Washington Post*: D1.
- 3 Charles Davant, “Away from Spotlight, Wyoming Congresswoman Prepares for Business,” 8 January 1999, *States News Service*.
- 4 Chris George, “Cubin Favors Seeking New Energy Sources, Drilling in Arctic Lands,” 15 August 2000, *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*: A6.
- 5 “House Expresses Dismay at Murder of Gay Student in Wyoming,” 16 October 1998, *Washington Post*: A24.
- 6 *Politics in America*, 2002 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2001): 1121–1122.
- 7 John Bresnahan, “Cubin Launches Leadership Bid; Wyo. Member Joins Conference Secretary Race,” 3 July 2000, *Roll Call*.